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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Amber Seidler  
(317) 233-5373

### **Doors Open for Winter Heating Assistance Applications**

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) opens the doors on November 1 for local Community Action Agencies to begin accepting walk-in applications from seniors, persons with disabilities, families with children under six, and persons with a disconnect notice for Indiana's Energy Assistance Program (EAP). This federally funded program was designed to offer low-income Hoosiers assistance with winter heating bills.

In October, IHCDA allocated almost \$44 million in federal heating assistance to Community Action Agencies throughout the state to administer the program and meet individually with applicants to determine eligibility. On November 1, walk-in applications will be taken from the state's most vulnerable population and those with a disconnect notice or who are out of bulk fuel. On November 20, all other eligible applicants are encouraged to apply.

"IHCDA is making every effort to ensure that low-income Hoosiers know how to apply for this assistance during the winter months," said Lt. Governor Becky Skillman, who serves as chair of IHCDA's Board of Directors. "We have been working with local utility companies, community action agencies and other not-for-profits to get the word out about the energy assistance programs available to Hoosiers in need."

This is the first year IHCDA will implement these programs since they were transferred from the Division of Family Resources at Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) in July.

The income qualifications for the EAP programs are 150% of the federal poverty level. For example, a family of four making less than \$30,000 would qualify, as well as an individual with an income of \$14,700 or less.

"Through the Energy Assistance Program, we can help ease the financial burden for lower-income Hoosiers during the cold months ahead," said Sherry Seiwert, Executive

Director of IHCDA. “We encourage those who are concerned about affording their winter heating bills to call IHCDA’s toll-free number for more information.”

IHCDA’s toll-free number is 1-800-872-0371. The average benefit is around \$250 per year, and it is paid in a lump sum directly to the applicant’s utility company. Last year, the Energy Assistance Program served over 158,000 households.

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*The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority’s (IHCDA) mission is for every Hoosier to have the opportunity to live in safe, affordable, good-quality housing in economically stable communities. IHCDA believes that growing Indiana’s economy starts at home. For more information, go to [www.indianahousing.org](http://www.indianahousing.org).*